

INTELLOFAX 21

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U 16468

COUNTRY: India

SUBJECT: Comments of his Excellency, G. L. Mehta, Indian Ambassador, at the University of Michigan

PLACE ACQUIRED:

DATE OF INFO: 13 May 53

2 pgs

DATE ACQUIRED: 25X1X7

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1. Mr. G. L. Mehta, Indian Ambassador, spoke on 13 May 53 before a group of foreign students at the University of Michigan, opening the university's International Week. The meeting was chairman-ed by Mr. Gupta, an Indian student working on his Ph.D. in chemical engineering at the University of Michigan.
2. The subject of Mr. Mehta's talk was "World Unity". No unusual statements were made, but he made a plea for unity based on a common cause for peace. He said that world unity need not be a distant ideal and that it is worth striving for. He said further that although this ideal might include being citizens of the world, it did not imply a world pattern of uniformity. In support of this statement, he quoted from President Eisenhower's recent foreign policy statement before a group of US newspaper editors. Mr. Mehta laid the failure of the League of Nations to national selfishness and said that although this was not the time nor the place to evaluate the United Nations, the UN still represented the only hope of survival and was an attempt to establish the moral course of the world; that its success would represent the success or failure of its members. Mr. Mehta reviewed the emergence of independent states since 1946. He referred to the problem of India as being one of transforming its rate of progress in a democratic manner and pointed to the Indian Five-Year Plan as representative of the determination of his country to achieve its goals by democratic methods. In speaking of Communism, his Excellency emphasized India's problem of a low standard of living was not related to Marxism. He closed restating his plea for world unity and quoted, from Tennyson, the famous statement which includes reference to, "the Federation of the World."
3. Subsequently, in conversation with his Excellency in a small group at a reception, Mr. Mehta said that India had now become self-sufficient in cotton textiles and depended no more on supplies from either the UK or Japan except for a few items which were not yet made locally. He said that the cotton textile industry in India was constantly improving, both in capacity and in regard to profits. He spoke of the handlooms industry as making a

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substantial contribution to the Indian economy and said further that the cooperatives which had developed within the handlooms industry were adding greatly to its effectiveness and stabilizing its future.

4. In response to a question regarding the food situation in India, his Excellency said that it was still necessary for India to import wheat and milo but that by the end of the Five-Year Plan -- or in another four years -- India would be producing all it needed of these grains and become self-sufficient in regard to food.
5. In response to a question regarding trade unionism, Mr. Mehta said that trade unionism was growing and that its organization was becoming stronger. That those unions which were Communist-dominated were not dangerous to the country, politically, at present and that the strongest unions actively supported the present government.
6. Concerning foreign investment, the Ambassador said that his country welcomed such investment. That there was some opposition to foreign investment which brought competition to Indian firms, but the general overall policy was to provide a favorable climate in which foreign investment could operate profitably.
7. His Excellency was in conversation with a local representative of the Ann Arbor Chamber of Commerce and spoke with him at some length in regard to his own (Mehta's) experience working in Chambers of Commerce in India. In response to an inquiry about the government relationship between the Chamber of Commerce and the government, Mr. Mehta said that the Chambers of Commerce in India are completely free of any governmental influence but operated similarly to the Chambers in the US, watching over legislation effecting commercial activities. Mr. Mehta seemed very proud of his experience with the Chambers of Commerce and considered them a beneficial and growing force in the Indian economy.
8. Also present at the reception was a Mr. Lalchand, who was described by Mr. Gupta as an eminent Indian industrialist particularly interested in shipping. Mr. Gupta said further that Mr. Lalchand was visiting a son who is attending the University of Michigan.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
INTERNATIONAL CENTER

and

The International Relations Committee
of the Student Legislature

cordially invite you to attend

a Reception

in the Assembly Hall of the Rackham Building

in honor

of the Ambassador from India

Mr. G. L. Mehta

immediately following His Excellency's address on

Wednesday evening, May 13th, 1953

ADDRESS AT 8:15 O'CLOCK, IN THE RACKHAM LECTURE HALL